



Early Journal Content on JSTOR, Free to Anyone in the World

This article is one of nearly 500,000 scholarly works digitized and made freely available to everyone in the world by JSTOR.

Known as the Early Journal Content, this set of works include research articles, news, letters, and other writings published in more than 200 of the oldest leading academic journals. The works date from the mid-seventeenth to the early twentieth centuries.

We encourage people to read and share the Early Journal Content openly and to tell others that this resource exists. People may post this content online or redistribute in any way for non-commercial purposes.

Read more about Early Journal Content at <http://about.jstor.org/participate-jstor/individuals/early-journal-content>.

JSTOR is a digital library of academic journals, books, and primary source objects. JSTOR helps people discover, use, and build upon a wide range of content through a powerful research and teaching platform, and preserves this content for future generations. JSTOR is part of ITHAKA, a not-for-profit organization that also includes Ithaka S+R and Portico. For more information about JSTOR, please contact support@jstor.org.

DANIEL DEFOE AND THE PALATINE EMIGRATION OF 1709

A NEW VIEW OF THE ORIGIN OF ROBINSON CRUSOE¹

I

The suggestions hitherto offered concerning the origin of Daniel Defoe's masterpiece, *Robinson Crusoe*, have long seemed unsatisfactory to the critical reader, and in no way fully explanatory of the tremendous effect of this piece of literature. There is hardly an introduction to Defoe's works that does not touch upon this point, nor is there a biographer who does not dwell on it to a certain extent; there are even more than half a dozen dissertations and separate articles which attempt to offer a solution. Yet nowhere could I find a conclusive argument to explain the remarkable phenomenon of a busy political journalist, at an age when he might gracefully have retired, turning once more, as in the case of "A true account of the Apparition of One Mrs. Veal," to the writing of narrative, and promptly surprising the world with a contribution of classic order.

The most distinguished living authority on Defoe, Professor W. P. Trent of Columbia University, attempts to describe this phase of the author's evolution. He first assigns all that is due to Defoe's own genius and experience as a writer to the popular narratives of the day, which he was supposedly fond of. Leading up to the beginnings of "Robinson Crusoe," however, the biographer says, "Finally when it is remembered, that in 1718, he was contributing to *Mists*, week by week, letters from fictitious correspondents, that his wide reading in geography had given him a knowledge of foreign countries, particularly of Africa and both Americas, and that he had long since shown himself to be a skillful purveyor of instruction and an adept at understanding the character of the average man, we begin to see, that, given an incident like the experiences of Alexander

¹ The subject of this study was suggested to the author by Professor Julius Goebel. To Professor W. P. Trent of Columbia University, who read the manuscript, he is indebted for kind advice and many valuable suggestions.

Selkirk and an increasing desire to make money through his pen in order to portion his daughters, we have a plausible explanation of the evolution of Defoe the novelist out of Defoe the journalist and miscellaneous writer."² Like an echo of this sounds a remark by E. A. Baker in the otherwise excellent introduction to his edition of "Moll Flanders" and "Roxana," when he says "not that Defoe cared a pin for art. In the case of such a man as he, always ready to turn his hand to any lucrative employment, business considerations of course came foremost."³

I should hesitate myself to accept these explanations of the origin of Robinson Crusoe as entirely satisfactory, for however prosaic the initial impulse of the author may have been, the conception of the work shows decided traces of idealism.

A. Kippenberg goes to the other extreme in not allowing that the book has been created from any other motive but free poetic glee. He accuses Defoe of "dealing Crusoe a blow" by telling us that he composed his work with a definite moral tendency.⁴

Before presenting what seem to me the basic elements of Robinson Crusoe, the result of research in Defoe's and other early eighteenth century journals, I will go somewhat deeper into the theories which have hitherto been advanced concerning the origin of this work.

It is a well known fact that Defoe's peculiar manner of presenting a story gave rise to these speculations. Artfully written introductions to the second and third parts of "Robinson Crusoe" enshrouded the whole work in an even thicker veil of mystery, leaving the way open for three entirely different interpretations. Those who believed that "Robinson Crusoe" was pure fiction or, to use Defoe's words, who reproached it with being a romance, were told that this imaginary story had its just allusion to a real story, and chimed part for part and step for step with the inimitable life of Robinson Crusoe.⁵ Now some searched for the real story, others jumped on the

² *The Cambridge History of English Literature*, Vol. IX.

³ "Moll Flanders" and "Roxana," with introduction by E. A. Baker, p. XV.

⁴ A. Kippenberg, *Robinson in Deutschland bis zur Insel Felsenburg (1741-43)*, p. 37.

⁵ R.C. III, XI.

word allusion and declared the whole thing an allegory. The real story, however, was soon discovered.

The account of a Scotch sailor, Alexander Selkirk, who experienced adventures very similar to those of Crusoe, is generally supposed to have furnished Defoe not only with the idea but also with the material for his story. Wright supplies a picture of the house in Bristol where Defoe is said to have met the mariner and to have received his papers.⁶ Trent, however, says there is no foundation for such an assumption, as the returned sailor has not been shown to have had any papers at all. Yet he, too, speaks of the Selkirk adventure as the germ of the book. Not only do the earlier English biographers such as Minto, Lee, Chadwick and Wilson agree on this point but also such a German scholar as A. Kippenberg, who calls the Selkirk adventures the seeds "which shot up brilliantly under Defoe's care."⁷ F. Wackwitz likewise points to the return of Alexander Selkirk as the upper limit in Defoe's sources, and vaguely draws attention to the rise of social science, the philosophy of Hobbes and the political turmoil of 1688 as the deeper problems wherewith was drenched the soil from which the Selkirk seed grew.⁸ Hettner, though older than either of these two, seems to have arrived nearer the truth than any of them by the force of his historial and philosophical intuition. He writes: "and yet it was the outer conditions of Defoe's life which became determinative factors in origin and contents of "Robinson Crusoe." The adventure of Selkirk gave the poet only a few scanty outlines."⁹

The other group of interpreters were misled, as I intimated, by Defoe's rather indiscriminate use of terms such as allegorical, just allusion, just reference, scheme, emblem, emblematic history, parable and allegoric history, in reference to his tale of adventure, and therefore we really ought not to be surprised at this "intrepid band of students", as Trent mockingly calls them, for taking "Robinson Crusoe" as an allegorical autobiography of its author. It reveals a certain sort of wit to compare the revolution of 1688 to a shipwreck, the Earl of

⁶ Thomas Wright, *The Life of Daniel Defoe*.

⁷ A. Kippenberg, p. 21

⁸ F. Wackwitz, *Entstehungsgeschichte von Defoe's Robinson Crusoe*, p. 56.

⁹ H. Hettner, *Daniel Defoe und der Robinson Crusoe*, p. 292.

Oxford to a parrot, William III to an umbrella, the Tories to the man-eating Caribbeans and the Reverend Saccheverell to the first savage. Even as late as 1894 Thomas Wright, with great pride in revealing to us the true key to Robinson Crusoe, declares in all sincerity that all we have to do in order to arrive at important dates in the author's life is to add twenty-seven years to dates so carefully registered by the lonely islander. If, for instance, Crusoe was wrecked on the 30th of September, 1659, we, by this simple arithmetical calculation, arrive at the 30th of September, 1686, the day when Defoe's life of silence is supposed to have commenced. He kept quiet until December, 1714, which makes the period of his voluntary retirement from speech twenty-eight years, two months and about one-half, the length of time which Crusoe spent on his island. From all I have read of Defoe I have come to the conclusion that the one thing he could not do was to keep silent. And although this period of silence is supposed to be understood in regard to his family relations, we have no proofs at all for this reflection on his private life, so little of which is unfortunately known.

Wright's allegorical theories are repeated by Wackwitz, who does not seem quite sure whether to believe them or not. "If we remember how many essential points in Robinson were explained by literary models and suggestions these autobiographical traits, even if their truth were apparent, seem scanty and unessential. Experience of general similarity may have helped Defoe to put himself into the mood of the lonely islander and to describe them warmly, but events, characters and thoughts came to him from without."¹⁰ H. P. Geisler comes to a very much clearer and more satisfactory result: "The allegation that Robinson is an allegory of Defoe's life is based on an unlawful specification of a term which neglects the illuminating context."¹¹

As none of these theories, so painstakingly worked out by scholars and generally accepted, seemed wholly satisfactory, it was necessary to go deeper and to ask whether there was anything that happened in Defoe's own life previous to 1719

¹⁰ F. Wackwitz, p. 57.

¹¹ H. P. Geisler: *Is "Robinson Crusoe" an allegory?* P. 18.

which might have led him to the Robinson-idea. This idea being, as I interpret it, the struggle of man for individuality, for development of the self from its own resources, unaided and unhampered by civilization; in short: the producing of a state of spiritual contentment on the basis of a natural existence; the crying wish for ridding oneself or escaping from all negative human forces which drag us down, such as physical needs caused by unfavorable economic conditions, mental and spiritual anguish and serfdom created by conscription of thought and feeling, commonly called political and religious oppression. If, as I said before, we could trace in Defoe's life history—disregarding literary influences of any kind—an event or a movement which in its essence would reveal a sameness of ideas, an identity in principle and purpose with the Crusoe fable, we could justly point to it as a source of inspiration to the author—this notwithstanding the Selkirk report which, in my opinion, is nothing but a vehicle for Defoe's great message, though a most happily chosen one.

Even as great a poet as Goethe did not hesitate to use a legend as a vehicle for his finest thoughts—why, then, should a political economist and social reformer of Defoe's indiscriminate ardor not seize a fascinating adventure, true or fictitious, to make propaganda for his favorite projects? To exhaust the parallel, we might admit that the popularity of the continuation of "Robinson Crusoe," where the fable shrinks to a shadow and the moral rules supreme is today no greater than was that of the second part of "Faust," where also the action is lost in the sand-dunes, and hair-splitting philosophizing reveals the writer's true aim. Goethe is as little a dramatist as Defoe a novelist in these respective parts of their works. Both use their skilled pen for a purpose. In Defoe's case this assumption has frequently been challenged by English and German critics. I hope, however, to confirm it by revealing the hitherto unrecognized or unknown forces which precipitated the conception of Robinson Crusoe.

It is well recognized that "one cannot examine the literary products of the reign of Queen Anne without watching for political allusion. It is often necessary to do so if one is to get a fair understanding of implied meanings."¹² When we apply

¹² Stephens: *Party Politics and English Journalism (1702-1742)*, p. 2.

this principle to Defoe's "Robinson Crusoe" it very soon becomes evident that the Selkirk theory does not wholly fit the case. The book is not only quantitatively far more than a circumstantiated tale of adventure; its abundant allusions to places and conditions most significant to the readers of the age show its author to be more than a genius of imagination. His mind seems to be pregnant with political happenings, his fancy dwells on social dreams. The idea of being transported to some spot where existence, based on an equal economic chance for every individual, is ennobled by spiritual freedom, appears to dominate his world of thought. In "Robinson Crusoe" this is very evidently the central idea; and it occurs again and again as a solution in Defoe's novels of crime. As Defoe once expressed it: "The transported felon is a much happier man than the most prosperous untaken thief in the nation."¹³

If it were possible to discover the cradle of this pet-idea, or, in other words, if any material could be produced which would prove Defoe's active interest or participation in the colonization schemes of his day, we should obviously have every reason to give it an even more prominent place in the moulding of the Robinson-idea and story than the previously accepted motives.

It has hitherto been entirely overlooked that Defoe actually did play an important rôle in the most remarkable colonization scheme of the time,¹⁴ a scheme which may well have furnished him with the germ idea of the story. Just ten years before the publication of "Robinson Crusoe," during the months of May and June, 1709, the citizens of the City of London were astonished to find the streets of that metropolis swarming with men and women of an alien race, speaking an unknown tongue and bearing unmistakable indications of poverty, misery and want. It soon became known that about five thousand of these people were sheltered under tents in the suburbs of the city. Addi-

¹³ Col. Tacques, p. 4.

¹⁴ In this connection Professor W. P. Trent points out to me that "although Defoe's interest in the Palatines is plain, and is shown as late as his "Plan of the English Commerce" and in numerous pamphlets, it is also true that he had planned for English settlements in South America as early as King William 3rd's day and that in his tracts about the South Sea Scheme and in "A voyage around the World" this type of colony was in his mind. Defoe's general and practical interest in English colonization was doubtless a continuation of the Elizabethan tradition."

tions were made almost daily during June, July, August and September, and by October from between thirteen to fourteen thousand had come. It was soon found that these people were Germans from the country lying between Landau, Speier and Mannheim, reaching almost to Cologne, commonly called the Palatinate. This sudden invasion of so many thousands of foreigners into a country where but few of them had ever appeared before, and where they were utter strangers, rather than into neighboring countries of like faith and kindred language that would perhaps have been more ready to welcome them, stands forth as one of the most remarkable facts of the time.¹⁵ Historians have endeavored, but failed, to discover some great moving cause, some all powerful impulse to which they might ascribe this monster emigration. Diffenderfer, whose account I am quoting, emphasizes the fact that no one reason or cause was responsible for this remarkable movement but that it was the result of a combination of causes which had long been at work.

Defoe, having just at this time returned from Scotland,¹⁶ had an opportunity of seeing and interviewing these poor people. After waiting a few weeks for the reaction of the public to this "German invasion" he takes up the matter in his "Review." The angle from which he approaches the subject is an excellent specimen of his journalistic skill. He knows his public and how to win those who were largely opposed to the foreign immigrants. He pretends to be talking on trade, a subject on which he was an acknowledged authority.

The essential of commerce, he points out, is people: "The more people, the more trade; the more trade, the more money; the more money, the more strength; and the more strength, the greater a nation. Thus all temporal felicities, I mean national, spring from the numbers of people."¹⁷ As a counterproof Scotland's poverty is quoted, which he thinks is caused by the emigration of its inhabitants. But what he is driving at comes only now: the question of what to do with ten thousand poor

¹⁵ Diffenderfer: *The German Exodus To England in 1709*.

¹⁶ Cf., W. P. Trent: *Defoe, How to Know Him*, p. 93.—His movements for the next seven months (after Christmas 1708) are not clear, but it is on the whole probable that he remained in London.

¹⁷ *Review*, No. 38 (July 2, 1709).

refugee Germans who had come over from the Palatinate. There was a concrete case to deal with, a sudden considerable increase in population, the advantage of which for England, though poor and foreign the newcomers were—it was now up to him to prove. A delicate task if we realize that the “Dutchmen” were not much more popular on the British Isles at that day than they are now.¹⁸ It was Defoe’s peculiar fortune to get himself into difficulties for championing lost causes, and had he not gone thru all the agonies and persecutions of a political and religious non-conformist he would not have found the courage to take up the cause of the persecuted Palatines. His undeniable sympathy for them was not only based on the fact that they were his brethren in faith, but on his extensive and first-hand knowledge of their history and civilization.

It was perfectly natural that the people of London and the vicinity should see nothing but a public nuisance, an imposition on their good will and charity, and a menace to their own poor and needy in these refugees, with whom they had nothing in common. Although individuals took them in, fed and clothed them, and the government furnished them with tents and inaugurated public collections thruout the country, the murmurings grew louder. Defoe had a hard time arguing down “his countrymen’s ill-natured suggestions of strange and imaginary mischiefs those poor people would bring them, of which not one tittle was otherwise true than in the prejudices of whimsie and ignorance.”¹⁹ He lectures to them most severely on their greed—“But it is our humor, we will wallow in plenty and let nobody partake of it;”²⁰ he ridicules their unnatural pride and barbarity which is all the more unfounded since (here one may perceive the strains of the true-born Englishman)²¹ they were all

¹⁸ Cf., Diffenderfer, p. 305: To many Englishmen, especially among the lower orders, the name of German was synonymous with that of Catholic, and this fact served to intensify the dislike with which these colonists were regarded upon their arrival in England.

¹⁹ *Review*, No. 41 (July 9, 1709).

²⁰ *Ibid*, No. 42 (July 12, 1709).

²¹ Cf., *The True born Englishman*:

“These are the heroes who dispose the Dutch
And rail at new-come foreigners so much!
Forgetting that themselves are all derived
From the most scoundrel race that ever lived.”

originally refugees in the shadow of Britain's wealth and fertility, yet "we will not because we will not have strangers settle among us because we will not."²²

Having spent himself with little apparent success in showing his public the blackness of the English soul, Defoe abandons moralizing and hopes to seize their interest by an appeal to their business instincts. In going back to his opening argument on the material advantages a trading-nation draws from the increase in number of its population, he shows that in this case quality was added to quantity. If the people only knew who those poor beggars really were, what they really came for, and what they could do, if put in a condition to work, it might finally dawn on their involuntary hosts that a more cordial reception and wise disposition of them might not be a bad investment after all. Besides, he adds, the kindness shown to these poor people would help to wipe out the blots that lie in their characters as Englishmen abroad; if these people were received, kindly harbored, relieved and settled, it would be an unanswerable return upon those that should hereafter reproach the English, at home or abroad, with want of courtesy or want of humanity to strangers.²³ Confident that the public mind would change as soon as it knew the true state of these Palatines, Defoe put forth their whole predicament in the following brilliant editorial:

"The poor people we are now speaking of, to the honor of Britain and to the particular reputation of the present reign, are come over hither for liberty—to say they were beggars, and are come over for bread, is to say nothing. They were a flourishing people, they come not from barren mountains, unhealthful climates, or a poor uncultivated country—the Palatinate is known to be one of the finest, most fruitful, rich, pleasant, and healthful countries in Europe—the land rich, provisions plentiful, full of great cities and trading towns, full of people, full of commerce, and full of manufactures—the Rhine runs thru it, the Main and the Neckar traverse and encompass it; three rivers, the navigation whereof brings great trade, and consequently wealth to the inhabitants; they send yearly great

²² *Review*, No. 45 (July 19, 1709).

²³ *Review*, No. 62 (Aug. 27, 1709).

quantities of corn, wine and cattle into other countries. The plains and dales are filled with corn, the hills covered with vines, and the whole country allowed to be of the most pleasant and most fruitful part of Germany. It is evident they do not come because their country won't keep them or the earth supply their families with necessaries—but they are ravaged by enemies, they are the frontier of this bloody war, the French have frequently plundered their country, burned their cities and towns, and almost every year exacted contributions from them, with the utmost rigor. This has improverished them, and made them unable to pay the heavy taxes their own prince exacts—so that between Papism of the enemy and the imposts and exactions of their own sovereign, the poor people have been ruined, their labor devoured, their properties taken from them by violence, and they oppressed and devoured with unsufferable injuries.

“From these distresses they look abroad for *an asylum, a place of rest, a land where liberty is established, and property secured*; where what their industry has gained the government will permit them to enjoy; where they may reap what they sow, and eat what they earn—where they may call their souls their own, and may not starve in the midst of plenty.—And this they have been told, is to be obtained in England, above all the nations of the earth.—And to this end they fly hither—this is the true, genuine and only design of their coming.”²⁴

Tempting as it might be, it is beyond the limits of this present paper to exploit this unusual document for anything but what seems to bear upon the Robinson-idea. Defoe was apparently the only one in his country who defended the blind idealism of the Palatines and one of the few who could grasp it. A group of people leave their home and country, hurrying, as Defoe said of Robinson, after a dream and obeying blindly the dictates of fancy rather than their reason. What did the Palatines know of where they were going? Nothing. They believed that there was such a place on earth, an asylum, an island, where there was liberty and freedom of conscience, and they hoped they would get there. No more than ignorant children did they think of the practical difficulties such an exodus would entail. They never for a moment considered the

²⁴ *Review*, No. 61 (Aug. 25, 1709).

embarrassment they caused their own governments; it never entered their minds that at every station of their journey they would be a burden to the local authorities and they would have to depend greatly on foreign kindness and charity. As for the dangers and discomforts of trans-Atlantic voyage to that dream-island they hoped to reach—they could not have had the remotest conception of. “It was liberty they sought, liberty under which to live, to worship and to become happy.” Like insects swarming around the light they made for the irresistible phantom.

Their courageous spokesman could have told them a few things about liberty and the price of it in the most liberal country of the day—in England. “In the school of affliction,” Defoe says once, “I have learned more philosophy than at the Academy, and more divinity than from the pulpit; in prison I have learned to know that liberty does not consist in open doors.”²⁵ Neither in open shores, we might add, for the few who finally reached their destination, the English colonies of America, did so at the price of personal freedom. It proved to be more or less a trap set for them by the big land owners, especially of North Carolina, whose home government unfortunately seems to have supported them. The eagerness of these poor people, who were willing to better their conditions at any price, and their ignorance of conditions abroad, was exploited by unscrupulous trade-organizations. As this is a fact which has remained unexplained for many years, I consider the favorable attitude of England’s foremost editorial writer of particular importance. His statements gain almost the value of official documents espousing the cause of the colonization scheme, when one remembers Defoe’s relations to his government at that time. Speaking of the “Review,” the journal I have been quoting from, Stevens says: “This journal was at first intended as a moderate guide to public opinion but quite naturally its tone become more and more openly favorable to all administration measures.”²⁶ And in a letter of July 17 (1704) Defoe himself admits it to be a government organ.²⁷ If this be so, what reasons had the English govern-

²⁵ *Review* VIII, Preface.

²⁶ Stevens, p. 8.

²⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 47.

ment to express a sympathetic attitude toward the Palatines when its people had not a good word for them? Did anybody's conscience suddenly feel uncomfortable when they saw numbers of these wretched looking immigrants, who had been lured to England by greedy landowners, backed by the English government, wander from house to house and street to street asking for charity? Whether or not, it certainly touched the hearts of the Lords proprietors of Carolina, who on the arrival of the first thousands published in the "Gazette" an offer to give everyone of these Palatines a thousand acres of land on a peppercorn rent, though they demanded "that the government should pay eight pounds for every adult's transportation and four pounds for every child."²⁸

If the propaganda of the landowners furnished the immediate impulse of that monster exodus of the Palatines in 1709, the popularly accepted reasons, such as the widespread poverty, the religious persecution, and the exceedingly cold winter of 1708, lose considerably in their weight of conviction. Holmes regards "the flattering suggestions made to the Palatines in their own country, by the agents of land companies, who wished to secure settlers for lands in the British colonies in America and thus give value to their lands, as the immediate occasion for the movement."²⁹

The final proof of England's hand in the whole matter has only recently been furnished by Julius Goebel. He collected letters of the German emigrants of the year 1709, and in his "New Documents" to the history of the monster exodus of that year he writes:

"It is now quite certain that the English ambassador in Frankfort on the Main interviewed persons from various places, and advised them, that he furthermore gave them a pamphlet and distributed amongst them the book about Carolina, probably Kocherthal's 'Ausführlicher und umständlicher Bericht von der berühmten Landschaft Carolina,' which had appeared in Frankfort."³⁰

²⁸ H. A. Holmes: *The Palatine Emigration to England in 1709*, p. 8.

²⁹ Holmes, p. 5.

³⁰ J. Goebel: *Neue Dokumente zur Geschichte der Masseneinwanderung im Jahre, 1709, Jahrbuch der deutsch-amerikanischen historischen Gesellschaft von Illinois*, 1913, p. 181.

H. V. Todd likewise concludes his exhaustive treatment of the matter with the words: "The truth is, Queen Anne was attempting to continue Cromwell's plan of expansion, and in this program she was in need of increasing her subjects at home and in the colonies by inviting, and even subsidizing people, to settle in English America."³¹

The famous golden book with Queen Anne's picture on the front page did not fail to create in the minds of these suppressed people an exaggerated picture of the free and prosperous life in the plantations, in contrast to the poverty, desolation and oppression of their native land, and where the written word failed to convince, a free ticket to Holland, whence the transports to England were managed, facilitated the decision.³²

It would be for a psychologist to decide which, after all, were the prime motives for immigration in this case, attractive inducements in the form of land or toleration in religious matters. Indeed, most historians credit the latter with being the more powerful of the two.³³ Another inducement used by the colonies to attract settlers was naturalization. In many cases letters of naturalization were even issued to aliens in England, so that they landed in the colonies with all the rights and privileges of British subjects.³⁴ This was hardly the case with the Palatines who, according to a letter of a gentleman to the editor of the "Review," declared that they heard nothing of the "Act of Naturalization" before they left their country. Papers were dispersed among them, however, and fixed on their church doors, stating that if they came over into England, the Queen would send them over to the plantations.³⁵ There was a great discussion in Parliament over the whole affair, especially when it came to ratifying the appropriations for transportation and maintenance of these refugees; not only was the Act of Naturalization suspected to have been inaugurated "ad casum," and anti-immigration laws³⁶ passed, but it was pretended that

³¹ H. V. Todd: *Baron Christoph von Graffenried's New Bern Adventures*, p. 8.

³² Cf. Diffenderfer, p. 268.

³³ E. E. Proper: *Colonial Immigration Laws*, p. 13.

³⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 14.

³⁵ *Review*, No. 49 (July 28, 1709).

³⁶ Cf. Diffenderfer, p. 270. . . . This is shown by a Proclamation or circular issued by the English Government as late as the last day of December,

in the whole affair of Palatine immigration there was a hidden design of the Whigs against the established Church and to increase the number and strength of the dissenters. This view would explain somewhat the wholeheartedness with which Defoe in this case identifies himself with the attitude of the ministry³⁷ and his strange reluctance in letting the Palatines pursue their course to the plantations. It sounds like an expression of affection for them when he confesses that he is not for sending these people to America for other reasons, namely that he is not for parting with them from hence.³⁸ Whether he really thought they would in time become a substantial aid to his party, or whether an unselfish desire to spare them additional misery prompted him to express himself in the following way is doubtful: "I am not to tell you why you cannot do so (send these poor strangers) to our own island colonies, which some people are mighty fond of, regarding rather zeal to be rid of the present burden, as they would have it be thought, of the refugees, now upon our hands, than either the good of the poor people or of the colonies to whom they would send them. But in these islands, what shall these poor people do? The islands consist of merchants, planters, and servants . . . in either of these capacities you ruin them; if you send them to plant, they will starve themselves; if you send them to work they will starve the masters."³⁹

Defoe had said before that he could not see into the inconvenience of sending these poor strangers to the American plantations, but personally he preferred to keep them at home, that is in England. He proved that she was actually in need of people at this time, not only for the increase of trade but for the cultivation of unemployed and waste lands. He proposed to settle them in little colonies of about fifty to a hundred families in places like New Forrest (Hampshire) Sherwood

1709, in which further emigration is alluded to, and all persons are absolutely prohibited from coming over from Holland under pain of being immediately sent back to Germany.

³⁷ Cf. Diffenderfer, p. 268. . . . If after all, the English ministry was covertly at work and instigating this exodus, they operated so secretly that their fine hand was never discovered.

³⁸ *Review*, No. 50 (July 30, 1709).

³⁹ *Ibid.*, No. 51 (Aug. 2, 1709).

(Nottinghamshire), the Forrest of Dean and similar places. If improved by placing people in little colonies, these lands would presently become fertile, maintain vast numbers of people, and these people be a prodigious increase to England's wealth and trade.⁴⁰

Defoe's schemes for home colonization were not adopted, probably because the feeling of the English working classes had grown to a dangerous degree of aversion toward the foreigners,⁴¹ and partly because the Palatines themselves had expressed their disappointment at not being sent to the colonies right away. Neither was the Christian advice of a certain High Churchman, who suggested sending them all to Scotland where they could starve to death, followed.⁴² With the exception of those who had been taken in by private individuals and had found satisfactory employment, they were dispatched in the course of the following months to New York and North Carolina.⁴³

Comparatively few found their way to Ireland,⁴⁴ the government having issued orders to all mayors, justices of the peace, and other magistrates to aid and assist them, so that they might be kindly entertained and civilly used in the several places upon the road. Their numbers had already materially decreased; more than a thousand had died in the encampment at Black Heath, and nearly half that number was to perish on the seas on their way to America.⁴⁵

It is a story of sorrow and suffering, of strange heroism and touching modesty—this story of the Palatine immigration.

⁴⁰ *Review*, No. 47 (July 23, 1709).

⁴¹ *Ibid.*, No. 49 (July 28, 1709). "But the humour of the English Working People is at this time so averse to Foreigners, that some of them have declared, that if they come to work among them, they will be occasion of their deaths; and who knows of what consequence such a thing might be to this nation?"

⁴² *Review*, No. 48 (July 28, 1709).

⁴³ Cf. Kapp, p. 92. So wurden etwa 600 nach North Carolina eingeschifft und mehr als 3000 in April 1710 nach New York geschickt.

⁴⁴ Cf. Kapp, p. 91. Zuerst 500 Familien, darunter alle Leinenweber, und dann noch einmal 800 Personen, im ganzen 3800 Seelen wurden nach Irland geschickt um dort die Webereien und zugleich das protestantische Element zu heben. See also Diffenderfer, p. 328.

⁴⁵ Cf. Diffenderfer, p. 319.

"3200 were crowded into 10 small ships and set sail in March, 1710. They arrived at intervals between June 14 and July 24. 470 perished on the voyage."

It could not fail to impress those who witnessed it. As an event of political and economical importance for England it was bound to arrest the attention of such an expert in those lines as Defoe. Therefore he spoke and gave his views on the subject with the force of an authority. He made definite suggestions to his government and people how to face and solve this economic problem, which, in the suddenness of its appearance, looked much like a calamity. When he pleaded for the Palatines, begged his countrymen to receive them hospitably, and defended them against false accusations, he added to his professional interest a note of personal sympathy, which quickly enough was seized by his political opponents as a demonstration of his lack of patriotism.⁴⁶ When he accused his own people of being hard-hearted, proud and hypocritical, his party hatred carried him off his feet and his tongue reveled in abuse of his high-flying brethren. When he finally wanted to keep those stranded foreigners in England he may have had party interests in mind, but his reluctance to see them part, sounds more like straight-forward sympathy for those unfortunate creatures whom he was eager to spare the trials of a long and dangerous voyage and the lot that befell most of them at their destination. Undoubtedly he knew more about conditions in the American colonies than most of his countrymen and, naturally, more than the immigrants themselves. The curious fact that in their imagination North Carolina and Pennsylvania figure as "islands" throws some light on the geographical conceptions of the time. Their picture of the political status of those countries was probably an equally vague and incorrect one. "And even in their religious expecta-

⁴⁶ The *Examiner* of Sept. 21, 1710, brought a sarcastic attack upon those who showed sympathy with the Palatines. The small editorial is entitled 'Friends and Enemies to their Country' and runs as follows: "Those are enemies to their Country who, whether they are uppermost or no, prefer the interest of Great Britain before the interest of any other Nation, who are for strengthening our fleet, improving our trade, securing our constitution both in Church and State, and carefully provide both for the prerogative of the Crown, and for the liberties of the subject. But those are the best friends to their country, who love a Dutchman, a Palatine, or even a Frenchman, better than a Brittain; who if they cannot always rule us will endeavour to ruin us; disparage the success of our arms, labour to sink the public credit, and fairly give us over to the French."

tions the colonists were often seriously disappointed. For altho religious tolerance was one of the prime motives for colonization, it is nevertheless a matter of common knowledge, that the first colonists did not welcome others differing from them in belief."⁴⁷ The province of Penn was really the only one that came near the fulfillment of the hopes and wishes of those religious enthusiasts.⁴⁸ When those who survived the hospitality of the English people finally set out for her Majesty's plantations, Defoe's heart went out to them. Here the direct impression of his experience came to an end. In every capacity in which he tried to steer the course of the Palatines his efforts had been unsuccessful. With their departure to the colonies the whole problem assumed a new character, the possibilities of which Defoe was the first to realize.

II

The only realm left, however, in which Defoe's schemes and hopes for the poor immigrants whom he had befriended might come nearer realization was that of the imagination. Through this medium alone could he send to the dissenters and persecuted Christians of all nations the message of a new life of religious and political freedom, of liberation from the fetters and evils of European over-civilization and of a return to the primitive self-reliant state of nature which his German friends were now working out in the solitude and in the dangers of the primeval forests of the distant colonies. Thus was the poet in Defoe awakened. Several years elapsed, however, before the effect of the stirring picture of the Palatines' trustful idealism and self-inflicted adventure had made upon the artist's mind could take a form both intelligible and instructive and, above all, entertaining to the public. When, therefore, two years later, in 1712, the sober account of the shipwrecked sailor aroused widespread interest and stories of adventure acquired a sudden popularity, the astute newcomer in fiction

⁴⁷ E. E. Proper, p. 13.

⁴⁸ Cf. E. E. Proper, p. 54: "Pennsylvania was especially fortunate in this respect in having as its founder a man of noble character whose tolerant attitude toward all religious faiths and whose generous treatment of settlers from all parts of Europe was continued by his successors and became the settled policy of the colony."

could do nothing better than avail himself of a plot in which he could be sure the public would be interested. With fine understanding he perceived the similarity in the experiences of the shipwrecked sailor and of the emigrants, thrown into the desolate wilderness of the distant colonies, and into the simple story of Selkirk's adventure he wove the message that was destined to be hailed by the poor and heavy laden of all Europe.

The adventure of Robinson Crusoe, unique as it is, might very well be a double of the Selkirk-adventure, written by Defoe, as some scholars believe, but that would never be Defoe's Robinson Crusoe. We must not lose sight of the fact that his work consists of three equally important parts. Moreover, it will not do to dispose of the "Adventures" and the "Serious Reflections" by saying Defoe wrote them because Part I was selling well, and that they are nothing but appendices, more or less boresome. It would be equally foolish to claim for them the qualities which have made Part I famous. For a serious analysis of "Robinson Crusoe" they are, however, by no means a "quantité négligeable."

In saying, "the moral is never written for the fable; the fable is always invented for the moral,"⁴⁹ Defoe himself gave the suggestion that it is to "Serious Reflections," the part so heavily laden with the "moral," we must look if we wish to get at the backbone of the whole book. As he himself said, Part III is "not merely the product of the two first volumes but the two first volumes may rather called the product of this."⁵⁰ Now what Robinson seriously reflects upon is religion. His attitude toward the great forces of the universe has undergone marvelous changes. It is not so much his actual encounters and travels as the big adventure of being alone with himself for a practical eternity that has made a sober thinker out of a restless dreamer. How the happy-go-lucky, godless, young sailor was re-awakened to religious consciousness in the Christian sense will be touched upon later; here it is merely intended to point out at what sublimity of religious conceptions the older Crusoe had arrived. He achieved the only possible standpoint for the enlightened Christian, that of broad tolerance. While his evolution was that

⁴⁹ *R.C.*, III, Pref.

⁵⁰ *Ibid.*

of the average pietist, the strange course of his life showed those who longed for it a possible way to realize their zeal.

I have already spoken of the man who helped so many of Europe's suppressed idealists and religious enthusiasts by bringing them over to the new world. It was, therefore, very gratifying to find my expectations as to Defoe's personal connections with the leading spirit of English colonization in America verified by a statement of Trent's, proving the existence of an intimate friendship between the two men as early as 1703. At the time of Defoe's imprisonment on account of his "Shortest Way," it was William Penn who tried to save him from the indignity of the pillory.⁵¹ While Penn was a great diplomat, securing the support of all parties and succeeding in putting thru his plans, Defoe antagonized people by his pen and only achieved the same popularity as his friend when he took refuge in fiction. If we take into consideration the fact that many thousands of Germans who sailed to the "Insel Phanien" (as they called Pennsylvania) during the 18th Century, received their first impulse to emigrate from the reading of Robinson Crusoe and its German offspring, the "Insel Felsenburg" (1731),⁵² we may well ask whether the desire to stimulate emigration to Penn's colony was not among the purposes which guided Defoe in the conception of the "Life and Adventures of Robins Crusoe." Great as was the stimulating effect in Germany of such propaganda literature as Pastorius' and Falckner's pamphlets on Pennsylvania and Kocherthal's book on Carolina, their influence upon the extraordinary German exodus to America was far surpassed by Defoe's Robinson Crusoe. With the intuition of the genius its author, a traveller and observer of wide experience, had read deeper in the soul of the common people of Europe, and of Germany in particular, than any of his contemporaries, and the result was a book of world-wide and lasting fame and influence. While the effect of the literary and aesthetic qualities of Defoe's masterpiece, to which critics as a rule assign its popularity, shall not be denied, the essential cause of its world success lay in the appeal to the

⁵¹ Trent, p. 42.

⁵² See. A. Kippenberg, *Robinson in Deutschland bis zur Insel Felsenburg*, p. 118.

innermost longing of the time after a regeneration and reconstruction of human life in all its manifestations, a longing which was at the bottom of all religious, political, and economic movements of the period.

There is found one other affiliation of Defoe with a man who took an indirect interest in the Palatine movement. This was Nathaniel Mist, the Jacobite editor, for whose weekly journal Defoe wrote the so-called letters introductory—now termed leading articles—during 1717 to 1720.⁵³ Mist evidently sympathized with the Palatines as he failed to suppress letters from his German correspondents which reflected unfavorably upon the interference of the English king in the affairs of the Palatinate. Mist's correspondents were Papists, Jacobites and enraged High Tories, a class of men whom Defoe abhorred.⁵⁴ Since it was Defoe's business at that time to relieve Mist's weekly of its treasonable character and since his personal leanings as a protestant coincided with those for which he was paid by the Government, he did not hesitate to expose his business-partner who refused to be advised. Mist not only lost Defoe's friendship but also had to go to prison for three months.⁵⁵

This incident serves only as a proof that Defoe's interest in the Palatine problem was still alive in the years during which the "Serious Reflections" are supposed to have been written. On this assumption it is possible to make some sense out of a passage such as the following: "In like manner, when in these reflections I speak of the times and circumstances of particular action done, or incidents which happened in my solitude and island life, an impartial reader will be so just to take it as it is, namely that it is spoken or intended of that part of the real story which the island life is a just allusion to . . . besides all this, here is the just and only good end of all parable or allegoric history brought to pass, namely for moral and religious improvement."⁵⁶ Here the author of "Robinson Crusoe" once more and most emphatically points to the purpose of his work and justifies the form in which he has presented it. Moral and religious

⁵³ Trent, p. 150.

⁵⁴ Lee, p. 271.

⁵⁵ Lee, p. 347.

⁵⁶ *R.C.*, III, Pref.

improvement is the end which justifies the means—a tale of adventure.

Although, after due consideration of the material here offered in the way of contemporary articles, one is convinced of the importance Defoe himself attached to the Palatine movement, and is inclined to believe that it was essential to the conception of "Robinson Crusoe," it yet remains to point to a number of details which, in the light of our theory, lose their accidental character and become univocal means for the interpretation of the story. It would be foolish to claim for the following chapter of strange parallels, as it might be called, the place of infallible proofs. The question at once arises, however, why it was that Defoe made his hero the son of an immigrant and a German one at that.⁵⁷ If, as has been claimed, the charm of the novel lies in the fact that in the hero of the story we recognize those qualities of resourcefulness and practical commonsense that have made Great Britain the greatest colonizing power in the world, Robinson Crusoe ought to be a true-born Englishman. His father's name, however, used to be Kreutznaer, which as Defoe says became by the usual corruption of words in England, Crusoe.⁵⁸

More important, after all, than the man's national descent is the social sphere from which he comes. It forms his tastes and habits or, in other words, his character. "Defoe nowhere endeavors to represent his hero as other than he really is, a rather ignorant adventurer of no high character or exceptional endowments. An ordinary man in a situation that appeals extraordinarily to our sympathy, both man and situation set before us so vividly that we are continually asking ourselves: would I have thought of that expedient, or saying, that is what I should have done?"⁵⁹ Others have been pleased to call him

⁵⁷ *R.C.*, I, 1 . . . my father being a foreigner of Bremen, who settled first at Hull.

⁵⁸ In trying to trace this name I found a Johannes Creutz amongst the list of emigrants Goebel gives in his "Letters of German Emigrants," *Jahrbuch der deutsch-amerikanischen historischen Gesellschaft von Illinois*, 1912, p. 124 ff. This man begs his most serene Highness, the Prince of Nassau Dillenburg to be permitted to travel to the so-called island Carolina.* Whether this name came to Defoe's attention and in what manner, I do not know.

* (Goebel: *Briefe deutscher Auswanderer aus dem Jahre 1709*, p. 39. Brief XXXVI).

⁵⁹ W. P. Trent, p. 188. See also H. Hettner, *Geschichte der engl. Literatur*, p. 309 (1872).

merely a typical English colonist, commonsense and practical, who sets to work with all his ability to make the most he can out of existing conditions.

The emigrants from the Palatinate show many of these same characteristics, as is proved by the various character sketches which contemporary English writers made of them. Of especial interest is the account of an anonymous author in the "Ecclesiastical Records of the State of New York" who describes them as "a temperate, modest, courteous, industrious, and honest people, without the least symptoms of immorality, debauchery, or profaneness; cheerful in their calamitous condition, grateful in the sense of what has been done for them, and in all things demeaning themselves without giving offense or injury to anybody."⁶⁰

The note of dash, enterprise and independence which we naturally miss here, does not come in until quite a bit later when they had thrown off the bonds of their first exploiters and could, like Crusoe, develop their pioneer instincts unguarded and unguided. The early settlers of New York, for instance, whose history has so brilliantly been written by Friedrich Kapp, could not show what material they had in them, until they revolted against Governor Hunter and set out for the beautiful Schohary Valley, which the Indians had presented to Queen Anne for the express purpose of settling the Germans there. Kapp speaks of them as of a useless horde of adventurers and rogues as long as Hunter kept them in a state of slavery. Schohary, however, he calls the most interesting of all German settlements in America, because its history can be traced back to its very beginnings, and because "it represents—a *Robinsonade on a large scale*—to us the gradual development of a civilized community in its successive advance from dire need to the satisfaction of the crudest elementary wants of hunger and need to comfort and wealth, to a state of toleration and righteousness, to political independence and freedom."⁶¹

There is one other trait Robinson has in common with the German emigrants and which is probably the doubtful heritage of his German father, his "Wanderlust" or roving passion. He

⁶⁰ *Ecclesiastical Records of the State of New York*, III, p. 1792.

⁶¹ Kapp, p. 122.

calls it a "fateful propension of nature" tending directly to the life of misery which was to befall him.⁶² Aside from this evil influence, which he was unable to control and which first carried him away from his father's house, there was also the money-making instinct which many, I suppose, would ascribe to his English blood. We have come to realize, however, that it is a gross prejudice to limit materialistic propensities to the business nations of the world. Robinson shares his wild and undigested notion of raising his fortune with many who came after him to the American shores, whether religion or adventure was their official watchword. After acquainting himself with the sugar trade in the Brazils, seeing how well the planters lived, and how they grew rich suddenly, Crusoe resolves to settle there, too, and turn planter. For this purpose he needs a "letter of naturalization" such as the Palatines were given before they left for the colonies. Like them he also is supplied with all sorts of tools, ironwork and utensils necessary for his plantation.⁶³

The next point of similarity between the Crusoe and the German colonists is their destination. The fact that the countries they set out for, though figuring in their minds as "islands," were not islands, does not detract from the similarity of their existence on them as compared with Robinson's life on his geographical island. Although it is not probable that Defoe knew of a German settlement at the mouth of the very same river where the Robinson-island is supposed to be situated, it seems a striking coincidence that it was a Palatine who first explored the mouth of the river Orinoco. This man was Georg Hohermuth from Speyer, Governor of Venezuela, who as the leader of six hundred emigrants, left Spain on October 18, 1534, and reached the Venezuelan port of Coro on February 6, 1535.⁶⁴

As to the dangers of the island life which Crusoe had to face in the form of savages and beasts, we need but turn to the history of the Palatine settlers for similar surprises awaiting them. Not only were they originally settled on the Hudson with the express purpose of forming a barrier against the attacks of the French and the Indians, but many an encounter with ferocious beasts is recorded.

⁶² *R.C.*, I, 1.

⁶³ *R.C.*, I, 40.

⁶⁴ Cf. Häberle, p. 28.

The treatment of the German colonists in the State of New York by the English governor puts me in mind of an episode in Robinson Crusoe (II) illustrating the intolerant, unkind attitude the three Englishmen bore toward their fellow settlers, an attitude which has its parallel also in the law excluding foreigners from the Massachusetts Bay Colony.⁶⁵ These three Englishmen were part of a mutinous crew, the captain of which was saved by Crusoe and who, in turn, undertook to bring him back to England. This opportunity offered itself so suddenly and unexpectedly just after Robinson had sent out an expedition under Friday's father and the old Spaniard, who had been captured with him, to rescue his countrymen from the Indians and settle them on the Crusoe-island, that he did not await their return but left a letter with the three English men carrying instructions and appointing the old Spaniard as governor of the whole colony during his absence. When the expedition returned, the three Englishmen, whose number had in the meantime increased to five by the arrival of two more sailors who escaped Crusoe's captain, took a stand wholly indefensible, as they themselves were there merely on Crusoe's sufferance. Nothing but the fact that they were there first seemed to count with them and justify their cruelty. Thus they treated not only the Spaniards, who were in the majority, almost as their servants, but denied their own countrymen who had come ashore after Crusoe left, almost the right of existence. "When the Spaniards came home at night he took freedom to reprove the three Englishmen, and asked them how they could be so cruel, they being harmless themselves, indelusive fellows, and that they were only putting themselves in a way to subsist by their labors, and that it had cost them a great deal to bring things to such perfection as they had. One of the Englishmen returned very briskly: what had they to do there that they came on shore without leave, and they should not plant or build upon the island, it was none of their ground. Why, says the Spaniard very calmly, Seigneur Inglese, they must not starve. The Englishman replied like a true, rough-hewn Tarpaulin, they might starve and be damned. They should not plant or build. But what must they do then, Seigneur? said the Spaniard. Another of the brutes returned,

⁶⁵ Cf. E. E. Proper, p. 23.

"Do! d—n 'em, they should be servants and work for them. But how could you expect that of them? says the Spaniard, they are not bought with your money; you have no right to make them servants. The Englishman answered, the island was theirs, the governor had given it to them, and to his comrade he said, "Come, Jack, let us go; we'll demolish their castle, I will warrant you; they shall plant no colony in our dominions."⁶⁶

Whatever may have been Defoe's purpose in recounting this tale of unusual hardheartedness and unreasonable overbearance on the part of the Englishmen,⁶⁷ he could not more effectively or dramatically have exposed one of the great blunders of early colonization. Other authorities have stated the matter no less succinctly. "The English Government failed to recognize the first principle of a healthy colonial policy. It interfered with the independence, the responsibility of its settlers, and consequently had to atone for it."⁶⁸ "Even when the disastrous outcome of their experiment was apparent, the colonial authorities of New York did not make the best of the situation and by liberal grants of land and hospitable treatment aided the German immigrants to establish themselves in the provinces; on the contrary they grudgingly doled out a mere scrap from their vast domain and then refused to protect the settlers in their rights after they had spent years of labor on their lands."⁶⁹

Aside from being a clever allusion to real or similar happenings, the incident about the Spaniard and the Englishmen plays a very important part in the structure of the novel. It is here that the social factor is first introduced on a larger scale, for the life of Crusoe's colonists is vastly different from that of its first settler. It is at this point that the reader begins to wonder whether "Robinson Crusoe" will develop into a Utopian story. The hero takes a sort of inventory of himself and his achievements, which Brüggemann considers a possible basis for an ideal state. "My island," the modest confession begins, "was now peopled, and I thought myself very rich in subjects; and it was a merry reflection which I frequently made, how like a king

⁶⁶ *R.C.*, II, 46.

⁶⁷ "The brutality of the lawless Englishman is much harped on by Defoe in many writings" (W. P. Trent).

⁶⁸ Kapp, 96.

⁶⁹ Proper, p. 43.

I looked. First of all the whole country was my own mere property so that I had an undoubted right of dominion. Secondly, my people were perfectly subjected. I was absolute lord and lawgiver; they allowed their lives to me and were ready to lay down their lives if there had been occasion of it for me."⁷⁰ Nowadays one would call this an amiable confession of a Junker "par-excellence." Brüggemann warns the reader not to come to a hasty conclusion from this statement, for the ideal which Robinson harbors for his colony is to him, as the practical Englishman, pre-eminently an economic one. The ideal of founding an ideal state in the sense of an Utopia is by no means an impelling factor with him. "It is in accordance with economic considerations that Robinson takes back with him not only ample supplies, but also colonists which are chosen with an eye to their skill as artisans."⁷¹

Furthermore, I should venture to say that even the economic outlook is of secondary importance to Robinson Crusoe. His warmest interests are devoted to the ethical element. More important than the political and economic aspects of his plantation are to him the religious principles by which he wishes the spiritual life of his islanders conducted. So he modifies his autocratic aspirations immediately by announcing the most liberal policy in religious matters. "It was remarkable, too, we had but three subjects and they were of three different religions. My man Friday was a protestant, his father a pagan and a canibal, and the Spaniard was a Papist. However, I allowed liberty of conscience thruout my dominions."⁷² Thus Crusoe does not attempt the foundations of an ideal state, but only insists on making the island safe for religious equality. This full-fledged religious freedom changes the island from what

⁷⁰ *R.C.*, I, 272.

⁷¹ Brüggemann, p. 102. "I carried two carpenters, a smith and a very handy ingenious fellow, who was a cooper by trade, but was also a general mechanic; for he was dexterous at making wheels and handmills to grind corn, was a good turner, and a good pot maker. He also made anything that was proper to make of earth or of wood; in a word, we called him our jack-of-all-trades. With these I carried a tailor who consented to stay on our new plantation, and proved a most necessary handy fellow as could be desired in many other businesses besides that of his trade; for as I observed formerly, necessity arms us for all employments." *R.C.*, II, p. 12.

⁷² *R.C.*, I, 272.

the exile might have been to Crusoe's colonists into what Defoe calls an asylum, a place of rest, where one may call one's soul one's own.

Here another point of parallel with the Palatines suggested itself; the interdependence of their relation to God in the different phases of their adventure. As with Crusoe there was a long time during which he was indifferent toward God and religion, until sickness one day extorted the first prayer from his lips, so the Palatines—little as they may be blamed for it—were at the beginning of their colony life, while under English rule, anything but exponents of Christian virtue.⁷³ Not until thru the sufferings which the immigrants in both cases had to pay for their self-enfranchisement, was their religious self re-awakened, nor did they come into the blessings of their self-imposed sacrifice. This re-awakening or second conversion to Christianity under the influence of solitude is one of the most beautiful passages of the book.⁷⁴

Solitude thus becomes the means to spiritual happiness and peace. Though eager to make his first fellowman in this new existence a disciple of his own creed, Robinson keeps his Christianity pure but respects the confessors of other convictions for their sincerity. Robinson-Defoe goes so far in spiritual self-denial that he makes even a French Popish priest the spokesman of the highest religious principles. "I had here a spirit of true Christian zeal for God and religion before me,"⁷⁵ he says of this man. The sincere young Catholic displays unusual broadmindedness but the arch-dissenter improves on this. "It presently occurred to me that if such a temper was universal we might be all Catholic Christians whatever church or particular profession we joined to or joined in; that a spirit of charity would soon work us all up into right principles and in a word as he thought that the like charity would make us all Catholics,

⁷³ Cf. p. 34.

⁷⁴ *R.C.*, I, 108. . . . "It was now that I began sensibly to feel how much more happy this life I now lived was, with all its miserable circumstances, than the wicked, cursed, abominable life I led all the past part of my days . . . from this moment I began to conclude in my mind that it was possible for me to be more happy in this forsaken, solitary condition, than it was probable I should ever have been in any other particular in the world, and with this thought I was going to give thanks to God for bringing me to this place."

⁷⁵ *R.C.*, II, 132.

so I told him I believed had all the members of his church the like moderation they would soon be all protestants."⁷⁶ It is no wonder that Defoe was possessed by the question of religious tolerance for it was not only the fatal crux of his own life but of the century in which he lived.

Although England became by name the acknowledged protector of religious freedom and protagonist of protestantism, it was mostly on German soil that the battle was fought. Not only "Robinson Crusoe" but the "Memoirs of a Cavalier," "Colonel Jack," bristle with allusions to the religious wars on the continent, and the blood-soaked valleys and plains of Germany seem to be ever before the writer's imagination. "What wars and bloodshed molested Europe on the account of religion in Germany."⁷⁷ Since Defoe had displayed such interest in the Palatine immigration of 1709 and 1710, his views, ten years later, on the state of religion in Prussia and Saxony as expounded in his "Serious Reflections," seemed especially interesting and pertinent to our subject. It is another indication that the novelist's historical background was not limited to the accounts of shipwrecked sailors and adventurers, or to the calamities of his own life, when he wrote "Robinson Crusoe," but that his creative mind was burdened with those unspeakable conditions under which so many of his protestant brethren in Germany suffered and which led many of them to desert their fatherland. To the old gentlewoman who asks Robinson Crusoe, "Pray, Sir, is not religion the principal business of mankind in all the parts of the world?", he answers despondently, "Really, Madam, I can not say it is; because what with ignorance on one hand, and hypocrisy on the other, 'tis very hard to know where to find religion in the world."⁷⁸

It is here, where, in my opinion, Defoe's propagandism becomes most effective. His criticism of the deplorable state of religious and political freedom in Europe in contrast to the ideal condition which Robinson had created on his island was bound to arouse the desire to emigrate to the land of promise. Passing review over all the nations of the earth he had visited

⁷⁶ *R.C.*, II, 149.

⁷⁷ *R.C.*, III, 158.

⁷⁸ *R.C.*, III, 143.

on his travels in search for "religion" and those he had read about, making many a brilliant remark and capital characterization of them, he also turns to the Lutherans of Germany, especially among the courts and cities of Brandenburg, Saxony, etc. Here he had opportunity to view a court affecting gallantry, magnificence, and gay things, to such an extent, and with such a passion, as to exceed the whole world in that empty part of human felicity called display. Nor was his notion wrong, for the first thing he found sacrificed to this voluptuous humour was the liberties of the people, who being by constitution or custom rather under absolute government, and at the arbitrary will of the prince, are sure to pay, not all they can spare, but even all they have, to gratify the unbounded appetite of a court given up to pleasure and exorbitance. . . . How far poverty and misery may prompt piety and devotion among the poor inhabitants, he cannot say, but if luxury and gallantry, together with tyranny and oppression to support it, can subsist with true religion in the great men, then the courts of Prussia and Dresden may be the best qualified in the world to produce this thing called religion, which, he has hitherto seen, was hard to be found.⁷⁹ Notwithstanding what he has said, Defoe eulogizes King Frederick William and concludes, "a government may be tyrannical, and yet the King not be a tyrant." But he can not see the religion of it all. "And where pray is the religion of all this? That a whole nation of people should appear miserable, that their governors may appear gay. The people starve, that the prince may be fed, or rather the people be lean, that their sovereign may be fat; the subjects sigh, that he may laugh; be empty that he may be full; and all this for mere luxury, not for the needful defense of the government—resisting enemies, preserving the public peace, and the like, but for mere extravagance, luxury and magnificence as in Prussia; or for ambition and pushing at crowns, and the lust of domination, as in Saxony."⁸⁰ Who would not leave the dearest a human being has, his native soil, and endure the privations of a foreign country rather than stand the humiliation of a tyrant? Whether the emigrants came from Prussia

⁷⁹ *R.C.*, III, 144.

⁸⁰ *Ibid.*, III, 145.

or Saxony, Suabia⁸¹ or Bavaria matters little; to the Palatinate clings the name of this enormous movement as we are best informed about its political, religious, and economic conditions of that time.

Doubly distressing, however, is the tragedy when the colonist finds conditions in the land to which he emigrated as depressing as, or worse than at home. This had happened in the case of the Protestant Dissenters of North Carolina. The pamphlets which Defoe hurled against that law "so ridiculous, so partial, so calculated for the ruin of the Colony that nothing but bad men that depended upon being superior in power to all human authority, the people should apply to, would have ever brought upon the stage of the world . . . a law that has the impudence to declare war against the Christian religion"⁸² offered an opportunity for sharpening his pen for future attacks on the religious liberties of the Dissenters, in his own as well as in foreign countries.

Tolerance is the center around which Defoe's thoughts move, and tolerance, especially religious tolerance, is the keynote of Robinson Crusoe's reflections. Tolerance, again, both political and religious, but mainly the latter, was one of the bright beacon lights which guided numberless German emigrants on their way across the ocean during the latter part of the Seventeenth and the first half of the eighteenth centuries.

That the principle of freedom of thought and conscience, the essence of true Christianity, for which Defoe had fought and suffered so much had not been realized in the early American colonies he was well aware, for he says: "America is thronged with Christians, God wot, such as they are; for I must confess the European inhabitants of some of the colonies there, as well French and English as Spanish and Dutch, very ill merit the name."

It was the great exodus of Palatines which, as we have seen, revealed to Defoe first the power of the ideal impulse for liberty that lived in these people and gave them the courage and

⁸¹ Cf. Kapp, p. 75. In 1709, the first mass emigration from Suabia to America took place, in 1717 the second one; from now on it continued during the whole century. In 1757, 6000 Würtembergers emigrated in a body.

⁸² *Party Tyranny, or The Case of the Protestant Dissenters in North Carolina*, p. 25.

strength to face unspeakable hardships, distress and dangers in the hope of finding the realization of their dream. With indelible colors this picture had inscribed itself into Defoe's soul, arousing there the best which life-long struggles and thinking had matured. The "Serious Reflections," above all, bear witness to the heights of wisdom, of political foresight and of serenity of thought to which he had risen with the advance of age. Following the poet to these heights we are able to decipher the picture language of the Robinson story, describing a new commonwealth built by individual and communal effort and pervaded by the spirit of freedom and tolerance, a commonwealth in search of which the Palatines had sailed across the ocean.

O. F. W. FERNSEMER

Oscoda, Mich.